

TAKE A BREATH



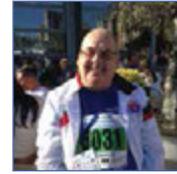
Chest-a-minute



UK
Helpline of
the Year!



Tobacco
free charter



Transplant
Story

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A RESPIRATORY PHYSIOLOGIST....

My name is Jacki O'Neill and I am the senior respiratory physiologist in NHS Highland. I work as a healthcare scientist using specialised equipment to make accurate measurements of lung function, these are often called breathing tests. The results are used by medical staff to help diagnose and treat people with respiratory symptoms.

Most of my time is spent assessing people who are referred from respiratory clinics as well as other clinics, such as rheumatology and oncology. For respiratory clinics, consultants need up to date results. We try to coordinate appointments so that test results are available at the same time.

Some people travel a considerable distance, including from the Western Isles and I have to arrange appointments to suit flight times. I spend a lot of time checking the Inverness Airport website to see if flights are on time! If flights are delayed it means a late finish as I always try to ensure that the person's breathing assessment is carried out that day.

As well as assessing people's breathing, I have to do other tasks such as reporting, sending out results, training and keeping up to date with new developments. Technology in respiratory physiology changes rapidly and one of the challenges of the job is keeping up to date with it all!

Despite the routine of clinics, I don't really feel that I ever have a typical day or week. Urgent appointments for people need to be fitted in at short notice and things don't always go to plan, so I have to be adaptable to get everyone seen.



The most important part of my job is communicating with people, explaining exactly what I need them to do to achieve the best measurements from them. The equipment can appear intimidating and the tests can be difficult for some people and require a lot of effort from them.

Some people can be too breathless or cough too much to do the tests accurately, others are anxious and need reassurance and some don't understand or speak English. These situations can be challenging but also rewarding. It's great when I obtain an accurate set of measurements for the consultant to work with to aid diagnosis and treatment.

Working with people is the main reason why I love what I do. Some I only see once, while others with long term conditions become 'regulars' as their condition is monitored and I get to know them well. Everyone has a different story to tell and it is very rewarding to help diagnose and monitor the people that I meet.



CHEST-A-MINUTE

"Oh my goodness, I'm so exhausted after taking my shower this morning, I had to sit down for ages afterwards until I felt better. It makes me terribly breathless – do you feel like that too?"

"I was taught how to pace myself when I'm doing things about the house. It has really helped."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, when I'm in the shower – I have a seat to sit on which stops me getting so tired. I can take my time to get washed. Then when I'm finished I wrap myself up in a big towelling dressing gown and that helps me get dried without all the rubbing – which was making me puffed out. I can sit and let my breathing recover while I dry before I think about getting dressed. When I'm getting dressed I just do it in small stages, it might mean it takes a bit longer but at least I'm not as breathless."

"That sounds like a good idea, where did you get your shower chair from?"

"My occupational therapist helped me get it and taught me about pacing myself, but the local social work department could help too, just look online for your nearest department or ask your GP or nurse."

"I will do, thanks for the top tip!"

HEALTH SKETCH COPD

CHSS would like to let you know about a new COPD Health Sketch Information film that was developed just in time for World COPD Day and is now available to watch from the CHSS website.

This animated short film has been created in a partnership between Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and Health Sketch, a company formed by a small team of doctors who are passionate about informing people about health issues.



The COPD animation lasts around 5 minutes and covers all the main areas of COPD. It's a really engaging and helpful way of informing people who have the condition and their family and carers. You can find it on the CHSS website on the COPD information page or by following the link below:

www.chss.org.uk/copdvideo

Please take a few minutes to watch the film. We'd love to hear your thoughts and get your feedback; you can do this by clicking on the link below, dropping us an email, or just call us and tell us what you think. See page 3 for how to contact us.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DSXN8LQ

Thank you for your help!

WORLD ASTHMA DAY

This year World Asthma day will be on Tuesday 3rd May 2016.

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects the lungs. It causes swelling and narrowing of small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs, causing shortness of breath, cough or wheeze.

Asthma is common, affecting over 350,000 people in Scotland and is the second most common long term health condition in the county.

Sadly, there is no cure. However, the symptoms can be well controlled with treatment and by avoiding irritants (triggers) that make it worse.

Whether you have asthma yourself or you have children or grandchildren with the condition, visit the My Lungs, My Life Website to find out all you need to know about living with Asthma. **www.mylungsmylife.org**



Helpline Awards 2015 WINNER

UK HELPLINE OF THE YEAR!

CHSS Advice Line Nurses
0808 801 0899
(Free from landlines and mobiles)



Have your say...

Do you have any new information about services in your area, an interesting story or a helpful hint to share with people affected by chronic lung disease? Then please let us know so that we can share it with others. We'd love to hear from you:

Contact us by e-mail on respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk
Or call us on 0131 225 6963

We look forward to hearing your news!

CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for people living with lung conditions and their carers to help CHSS update its 'How to Manage your Breathlessness', 'Living with IPF' and 'Living with COPD' booklets. This will allow you to suggest ideas and comment on content. If you are interested - contact Jude Misson on 0131 225 6963 or email: judith.misson@chss.org.uk

TOBACCO FREE CHARTER

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland is pleased to announce that it has recently joined together with a number of other charities and organisations across Scotland in signing the Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation. This charter was created by ASH Scotland and supports the Scottish Government's goal to achieve a tobacco free Scotland by 2034.

CHSS has signed up to support this charter because of the detrimental impact that smoking and tobacco use have on Scotland's health and especially due to the significant contribution that smoking and tobacco use have on the main health conditions that this charity supports.

To highlight our commitment to this campaign we will be adding the Tobacco Free Charter Mark image to our web pages, beginning with My Lungs, My Life, as a symbol of our support for this important goal for Scotland's future.



SHARING STORIES This edition we hear about what happened to John. He has an interesting tale to tell of being diagnosed and treated for COPD. John's symptoms developed pretty quickly and that may not be the case for most people, it just goes to show that we are all different.

It's worth remembering that it is important not to

ignore symptoms of prolonged breathlessness or persistent coughing and ask your GP about your symptoms if you are worried.

If you have any questions or comments about John's story, we'd love to hear from you. Just drop us an e-mail at respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk or call us on 0131 225 6963.

Transplant Story

My name is John Docherty and I was lucky enough to have a double lung transplant.

I worked in the oil and gas industry. This has included working onshore, offshore and abroad all over the world. Before you all ask, I did smoke, drink and lead a full life.

In the middle of 2011, I found that I was really struggling for breath and could not walk very far so I decided that I needed to see the doctor.

I got an appointment with the nurse specialist, who gave me a few breathing tests. She then referred me to Raigmore Hospital for Pulmonary Rehab classes and also to see the respiratory consultant.

After rehab and a few appointments with the consultant I was finally called in to be diagnosed with COPD. I was given the news that I would not survive and most likely not see Christmas 2012. I was also told there was nothing they could do to give me extra time, the only option open to me was the possibility of a double lung transplant. There was no guarantee that I would even get on the transplant list, never mind get the operation.

From that day on I had only one focus and that was to get on the transplant list no matter what I had to do.

The road to transplant was not an easy one with loads of ups and downs. Most of the lows were me getting worse, knowing that nothing could be done and going in and out of hospital. In between times I had assessments at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital to see if I was even suitable for transplant. On my third visit when I was on my last legs was I put on the list as a priority. That was on the 28th September 2012.



I got my first call on the 12th October, about midnight, to say they had lungs available. Unfortunately they called back within 30 minutes to say they were not suitable. On the next afternoon I got another call and was flown down to Newcastle and transplanted through the night.

Recovery was short and sweet for me after the operation. I was a very lucky man and was up on my feet and out of the hospital within 12 days.

Since I had the operation I have not had a problem at all. I have achieved a few goals that I set myself. One of which was to do the Baxter's Loch Ness 10k in September 2013 before my first 'Lungaversary'. I also competed in the British Transplant Games in July/August 2015, had my first holiday abroad since I had the op and got back to work in the oil and gas industry.

My other passion is to help others who are struggling with their breathing the way I was. I am happy to give advice and answer any questions, based on my experience. Please contact respiratoryservices@chss.org.uk if you would like to ask something.

HOW TO REGISTER Don't want to miss the next issue of Take a Breath? You can sign up to receive an e-mail alert that will let you know that the next issue is available, and a link to take you straight there!

Visit: www.chss.org.uk/takeabreath-highland for more information